

## **ASCR and Agricultural Marketing Service Host the 2007 USDA Disability Awareness Conference**

ASCR and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) co-hosted the 2007 USDA Disability Awareness Conference. The two-day conference was held on April 24-25, 2007, at California State University in Fresno, California. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Annabelle Romero and AMS Deputy Administrator Robert C. Keeney provided opening remarks to an audience of more than 50 managers and supervisors from USDA agencies.

This is the fifth Disability Awareness Conference in which Civil Rights has partnered with USDA agencies to hold these conferences throughout the country. The conferences provide an opportunity for USDA managers and supervisors to gain a greater awareness of USDA's commitment to increase the recruitment, career advancement and retention of persons with severe disabilities in USDA's permanent workforce. Participants learn that persons with disabilities have the skill sets needed to meet USDA's mission critical occupations.

AMS employees participated in a panel discussion to dispel misconceptions and stereotypes regarding the capabilities of persons with disabilities. Many of the panel members shared their professional success stories.

Persons with severe disabilities make up 2.16 percent of the permanent Federal government workforce. USDA's goal is to increase the number of persons with severe disabilities in the permanent workforce at USDA to meet the Federal government rate of representation.

To learn more about USDA's strategies to increase employment of persons with severe disabilities, contact USDA's Departmental Disability Employment Program Manager using the contact information below:

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